

REMARKS

Applicants acknowledge that claims 2, 7, 23, 24, 27, 35 and 39 are merely objected to and are otherwise considered to be in condition for allowance, as indicated in the September 30, 1999 Office Action at pages 15-17.

Applicants have amended claim 1 to incorporate the features of claim 2, amended claim 22 to incorporate the features of claim 23, and have amended claim 34 to incorporate the features of claim 35. Given the indication of allowability of claims 2, 23 and 35, independent claims 1, 22 and 34 as amended are in condition for allowance.

Dependent claims 3-11 are in condition for allowance, for example, in that they depend from and more specifically recite the invention of allowable claim 1.

Dependent claims 24-33 are in condition for allowance, for example, in that they depend from and more specifically recite the invention of allowable claim 22.

Dependent claims 36-44 are in condition for allowance in that, for example, they depend from and more specifically recite the invention of claim 34.

Independent claim 12 and dependent claims 13-21 have been canceled without prejudice.

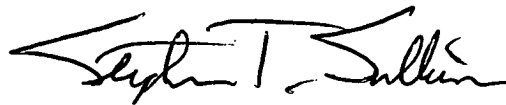
Applicants do not concede to the positions taken in the Office Action of September 30, 1999, and respectfully take issue with them. To further the prosecution of this application, however, Applicants have elected to cancel without prejudice the rejected claims and will pursue them in a separate application.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that claims 1, 3-11, 22, 24-34 and 36-44 are in condition for allowance and should be passed to issue. Applicants respectively request reconsideration of the application and allowance of these claims.

Applicants have submitted concurrently herewith a Petition for Extension of Time and a check for \$ 435.00. A Continuing Prosecution Application and filing fee also are submitted herewith. If any additional fees or amounts are due in connection with the filing of this paper or the prosecution of this application, please notify the undersigned so the fee can be promptly submitted.

Dated: March 30, 2000

Respectfully submitted,



Stephen T. Sullivan
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Date of Deposit March 30, 2000

I hereby certify that this paper or fee is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service under 37 C.F.R. § 1.10 on the date indicated above and is addressed BOX AF, Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231.

